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FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AND WAYS AND MEANS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to Commission resolution 1993/46 of 8 March 1993

1. In its resolution 1993/46 of 8 March 1993, entitled "Integrating the rights of women into the human rights mechanism of the United Nations", the Commission on Human Rights, welcoming the reaffirmation of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in its resolution 1992/4 of 14 August 1992, that the rights of women are recognized as inalienable human rights and that they should be treated as such in all United Nations bodies, including the Commission on Human Rights, requested that all special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission and the Sub-Commission, in the discharge of their mandates, regularly and systematically include in their reports available information on human rights violations affecting women.

2. The Commission on Human Rights further requested the secretariat to ensure that special rapporteurs, experts and working groups are fully apprised of the particular way in which the rights of women are violated. In addition, the Secretary-General was requested to consult with all the United Nations human rights bodies, including the treaty bodies, on the implementation of the resolution and invite them to report thereon to the Commission at its fiftieth session.

3. In the same resolution, closer cooperation was encouraged between the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women and their respective secretariats in the promotion, protection and implementation of the rights of women, as well as between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other treaty bodies.

4. In the same resolution, the Commission on Human Rights decided to consider, at its fiftieth session, the appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women, taking into account the work of the Commission on the Status of Women on the issue of violence against women, as well as the results of the World Conference on Human Rights in this area.

5. In accordance with Commission resolution 1993/46, the Secretary-General has prepared a brief outline of the relevant work of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as of the World Conference on Human Rights.

6. Following the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session, the Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1993/10 of 27 July 1993, urged the General Assembly to adopt the draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women, to urge Member States to adopt, strengthen and reinforce legislation prohibiting violence against women, and to request the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the declaration to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session, in 1995, and to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session, in 1996, once adopted. The Third Committee of the General Assembly adopted the draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women on 1 December 1993.

7. The Secretary-General also wishes to draw the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the fact that the World Conference on Human Rights emphasized that the United Nations should give priority to enabling women to enjoy fully their human rights. The provisions relating to the integration of the human rights of women into the human rights mechanism of the United Nations are contained in Part II, paragraphs 37 and 42, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/23), adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993.

8. The World Conference on Human Rights urged both Member States and the United Nations to give priority to the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights. The integration of the equal status of women and the human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activities was recommended. The World Conference also urged that steps be taken to increase cooperation and promote further integration of the objectives and goals of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights, the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations bodies. In particular, it was emphasized that cooperation between the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women must be strengthened. It was further stated that the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specifically the Centre for Human Rights, should ensure that the human rights activities of the United Nations regularly address violations of women's human rights, including gender-specific abuses.

9. Therefore, in accordance with Commission resolution 1993/46, as well as with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights has pursued close contacts with the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in order to elaborate a mechanism of cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights, especially with a view to integrating the human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations human rights activities.

10. In addition, the Centre for Human Rights has made a variety of proposals in order to implement the integration of women's human rights into the mainstream of United Nations human rights activities. In this context, the Centre for Human Rights intends to establish a focal point on women's issues in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights to deal with matters relating to the human rights of women within the Centre, as well as system-wide. The Centre, in close cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, intends to cooperate with relevant United Nations bodies, agencies and organs, including the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, especially with a view to elaborating a system-wide plan of action to implement the relevant recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights with regard to the equal status of women and men.

11. The Centre for Human Rights, through the focal point on the human rights of women, is further intending to continue to follow closely and participate actively in the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as in the activities in relation to the International Year of the Family in 1994.

12. The focal point, pursuant to Commission resolution 1993/46, would further, through a consultation process, ensure that all United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms, including the treaty-based bodies, are fully apprised of the particular ways in which the rights of women are violated and include gender-disaggregated data in their work.